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BENGALURU • TUESDAY • JANUARY 07, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

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TRUDEAU, JUST-OUT OF OFFICE

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

JUSTIN Trudeau on Monday announced his resignation as both the Prime Minister of Canada and the leader of the Liberal Party, putting an end to days of speculation amid rising discontent with his leadership.

He will, however, remain in office until the Liberal Party selects a new leader.

Pressure has been mounting on him from within the party and outside to step down. Trudeau has been accused of using allegations against India to divert attention from escalating domestic challenges, including a struggling economy and growing dissent within his party.

The resignation of close ally Chrystia Freeland as deputy PM and finance minister in December also dealt a significant blow. Freeland's departure was reportedly due to policy disagreements, particularly over his approach to possible US tariffs under Donald Trump and his overall economic strategy. In September, his government was weakened after the New Democratic Party led by Jagmeet Singh withdrew support.

Under Trudeau, Canada's relations with India soured over his government's alleged support to Khalistani separatists and his claims of New Delhi's involvement in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Khalistani radical in Canada.

He has held the prime minister's office since 2014.

Over the holidays I had time to reflect. I intend to resign as party leader, as prime minister after the party selects its next leader... Last night I asked the president of the Liberal Party to start that process
Justin Trudeau

Resignation may fuel calls for early polls

Justin Trudeau's resignation is expected to fuel renewed calls for an early election to put a government in place swiftly to deal with the incoming Donald Trump administration in the US. Trump has proposed a 25% tax on all Canadian goods entering the US. Going by opinion polls, the Liberal Party is likely to suffer a major defeat in the upcoming polls

HMPV cases in India: Much ado about nothing

5 cases so far; 2 in Karnataka; needless scare, say health experts

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

INDIA reported five cases of the globally circulating human metapneumovirus (HMPV), which is seeing an outbreak in China, causing worldwide panic as it comes five years after the Covid-19 pandemic. While two children each tested positive for the virus in Bengaluru and Chennai, one such case was reported in Ahmedabad.

In its pushback, the government emphasised that HMPV is self-limiting and manageable. Union health minister J P Nadda said it is not a new virus as it was first identified in 2001 and has been circulating in the entire world ever since. "There is no reason to worry," he added.

2001 BUG

- Nadda says no reason to worry; it was first identified in 2001
- Virus is self-limiting and manageable, says health ministry
- Karnataka, TN, Delhi, Maharashtra issue advisories on prevention
- Cover the mouth and nose while sneezing/coughing, wash hands, wear masks in crowded places

State governments in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Delhi issued guidelines for its prevention (See box). While two infants were detected with HMPV in Bengaluru, with no international travel history, one case was reported in Gujarat. Later in the day, two children tested positive for HMPV in Chennai. "The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has detected two cases of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in Karnataka. Both cases were identified through routine surveillance for multiple respiratory viral pathogens, as part of ICMR's ongoing efforts to monitor respiratory illnesses across the country," the government said in a statement.

World Health Organization's former chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan said on X, "According to @ICMRDELHI, #HMPV accounts for about 3% of respiratory pathogens detected in the laboratory network, testing ILI and SARI cases. Influenza A & B, SARSCoV2 & RSV are other circulating viruses." P3,12

Big Maoist strike in 20 mths, 8 jawans killed

Security forces cordon off a crater at the blast site on the Bedre-Kutru road in Bijapur district, Chattisgarh | EXPRESS

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

EIGHT District Reserve Guard (DRG) personnel and a civilian driver were killed in a powerful blast triggered by the outlawed CPI (Maoist) in strife-torn Bijapur district, about 400 km south of Raipur. The blast was carried out on Monday when a joint team was returning from anti-Maoist operations.

This incident marks the first major attack by Maoists since April 26, 2023, when 10 jawans were killed in an IED blast in Dantewada. According to Sundarraj P, Bastar range inspector general of police, the IED blast targeted a vehicle carrying the security personnel, leaving a 15 ft wide and 6 ft deep crater.

The explosion was so intense that it tossed the vehicle high into the air, ripping it into pieces. It is believed that the rebels had planted around 40 kg of explosives beneath the road.

The DRG personnel were on their way to the base camp from Abujhmad to Dantewada via Bijapur in the ill-fated vehicle. It is believed that the Maoists were aware about the return of the forces along the route. Brigadier (Retd) B K Ponwar said, "It was not a cowardly attack but a guerrilla attack carried out at the weakest point of the security forces. It's an unfortunate incident that was avoidable." He emphasized that the basic rules of warfare should not be flouted, especially in a virtual war zone.

Chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai has ordered a probe. The state government aims to eliminate the influence of Maoists by March 2026.

8-year-old girl dies in school, docs suspect heart attack

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

AN eight-year-old girl collapsed and died in a private school in Chamarajanagar district on Monday.

Doctors suspect her death due to low blood pressure or heart attack.

Tejaswini was a Class 3 student. She reached the school on time along with other students. Tejaswini was rushed to a private hospital, where she was declared dead.

Teachers tried to contact Tejaswini parents Ningaraju and Shruthi of Badanaguppe village. But they had kept their phones on silent mode as they were in a temple at Kullur village.

Ningaraj and Shruthi said they went to the temple to perform a puja for their daughter's well-being. They, however, did not give their consent for postmortem.

Engine fails mid-air, AI flight with 150 pax makes emergency landing at KIA

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

OVER 150 passengers on board an Air India flight had a miraculous escape after taking off from Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru on Sunday night when one of its engines failed mid-air. A passenger reported panic scenes on board. The pilot managed to steer the flight safely back to Bengaluru using the other engine, sources said. The flight took off at night and reached Delhi early Monday.

Flight AI 2820, an A320 neo model, took off from Terminal 2 of KIA at 7.09pm, though it was supposed to take off at 5.45 pm. After encountering problems mid-way, it returned to KIA at 8.10pm.

Air Traffic Control (ATC) sources confirmed that one of the engines of the flight failed when it was airborne. Police, who rushed to the airport at night, also confirmed it. Air India termed it "an operational issue".

An airport source said, "All emergency protocols were followed and ambulances and firefighters were on standby before the flight landed."

A top cop said, "I was told that an Air India flight to Delhi has developed an engine problem. I was asked to report for duty immediately last night as the flight carrying between 150 and 180 passengers would be landing shortly. The flight landed safely and there were no issues." P2

'Protocols followed'
"All emergency protocols were followed and ambulances and firefighters were on standby," an airport source said

There was some technical issue with the Air India flight and it returned
BCAS source

EXPRESS READ

SpaDeX docking gets postponed to January 9

Bengaluru: As everyone was eagerly waiting for the docking of SpaDeX on Tuesday, ISRO on Monday announced that it has been postponed to January 9. ISRO posted on X, "The docking process requires further validation through ground simulations based on an abort scenario identified today." In their subsequent post on X, ISRO also shared a video of the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) onboard showcasing SDX02 launch restraint release and docking ring extension. P10

EXPRESS INTAKE

BIFFes from March 1-8, 200 films to be screened | P2

Techie, wife hang self after killing 2 children in B'luru | P3

More female voters in revised electoral list of Karnataka | P4

Bastar scribe murder accused held in Hyderabad | P5

Sullivan powers nuclear deal on his farewell visit

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

THE US is in the final stage of removing all hurdles that kept the civil nuclear deal between the two countries a non-starter, outgoing US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said here on Monday.

As part of the move, the US will remove Indian entities including the Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre from its restricted list.

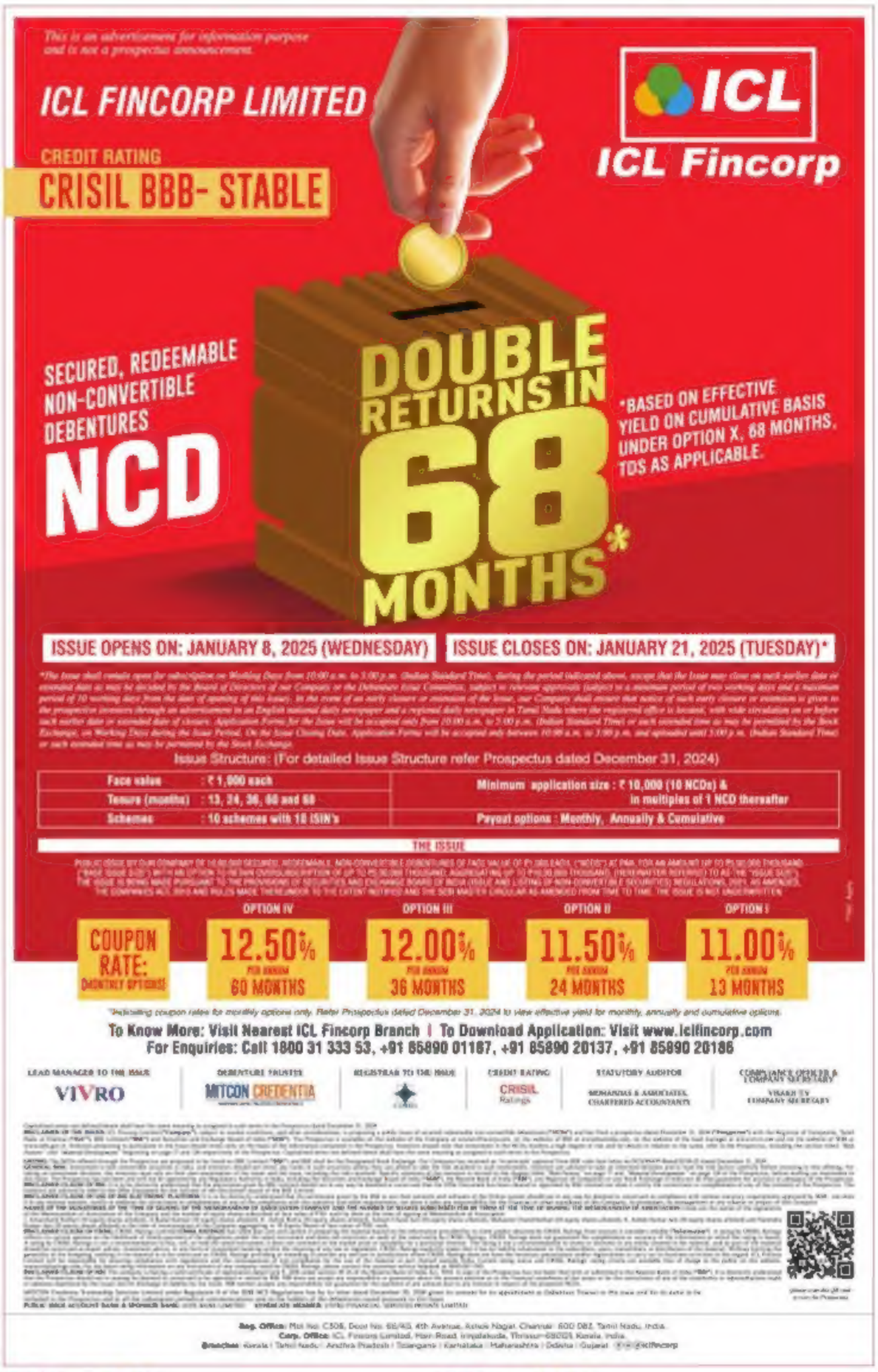
India and the US had decided to cooperate in civil nuclear energy in July 2005, following a meeting between then prime minister Manmohan Singh and US president George W Bush. The India-US civil nuclear agreement was signed in 2008.

However, there was no tangible progress in the civil nuclear energy sector as India pushed a 'liability law' while the US kept Indian nuclear entities in its restrictive list. The US opposed India's nuclear liability law, which held the supplier of N-plants also accountable for any potential nuclear accident, saying it deviated from the global norm of holding only the operator liable for mishaps.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan (left) with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi, on Monday | PTI

Formal paperwork soon, says US

Sullivan said the formal paperwork to remove the long-standing regulations that have prevented civil nuclear cooperation, will be done soon. "This will be an opportunity to create opportunities for entities that have been on restricted lists in the US," he added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BELAGAVI SHOCKER

'Dead' man struggles to prove he is alive

SUNIL PATIL @ Belagavi

AN error caused by a staffer of a local revenue office has left a 62-year-old man in the lurch. He has been fighting for more than 17 months to prove that he is "alive".

Ganapati Khachu Kakatkar of Savgaon village in Belagavi taluk was declared "dead", and his proof of identity such as Aadhar card was cancelled by the tahsildar's office one-and-a-half years ago.

This problem started after Ganapati and his brothers applied for a "succession certificate" to claim their rights over six acres and 23 guntas of land, which was in the name of their late grandfather.

Ganapati's grandfather Masanu Shattu Kakatkar died on February, 2,1976. Before his death, he transferred nine acres of land each to his three sons and kept six acres and 23 guntas with him. Even after his death, Masanu's three sons did not bother to get the land transferred to their names. A few years later, Masanu's three sons died. Masanu's eight grandsons, including Ganapati, decided to get the land transferred to their names two years ago. P6

I suffered a lot. I have been deprived of benefits such as old age pension, food-grains, crop loss compensation, assistance from PM Kisan Fund, etc
Ganapati Khachu Kakatkar